

Conflicts of Interest Inhibiting Fair and Adequate Representation for Athletes within NCAA Member Institutions

Main Administrators, Athletics Staff, and Groups Available to Athletes on Campus		
Title(s)	Main Role	Conflict of Interest or Barrier to Adequately Representing Athletes
President or Chancellor	Ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of the intercollegiate athletics program and the actions of any board in control of that program. Primary executive authority for an institution. (NCAA Const. Art. 6)	Varying levels of control over the athletic department, depending on the school, the success of the program, and how the athletic department functions within the school system. Often lack interest and/or knowledge of the inner-workings of the athletic department. Heavily concerned with school's reputation and donors.
Athletics Board (not required by NCAA, but suggested in manual)	Advising or establishing athletics policies and making policy decisions. (NCAA Const. Art. 6)	These are individuals employed by the school full-time, and may act in the interest of keeping their jobs over working for the best interest of athletes. Board members are often not very accessible (or well-known), and it is often comprised of faculty members who have limited understanding athletics broadly.
Athletic Director	Responsible for overseeing athletic department and fundraising for the athletic department.	Varying levels of control over certain coaches, depending upon the popularity and success of the coach and team. Primary role of fundraising can run counter to interests of athletes. Styles and policies of ADs vary tremendously by school. Range from highly involved and invested in athletes to not easily accessible.
Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors/Team Sports Administrator	Primary role within the athletics department, usually with oversight over a specific area and/or sport. (This category is intended to include SIDs and related athletics staff).	Direct conflict of interest as athletic department administration. Often under pressure to keep issues discrete and face possible ramifications for speaking out
Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR)	Member of the institution's faculty or administrative staff who is designated by the institution's president or chancellor to represent the institution and its faculty in the institution's relationships with the NCAA and its conference(s) (NCAA Const. Art.4.); Holds faculty rank and shall not hold an administrative or coaching position in the athletic department (NCAA Const. Art. 6);	Usually one of the greatest proponents for athletes on campus and within the NCAA, but virtually powerless to override or control decisions made by Presidents, ADs, or coaches. Responsibilities associated with their position and as a faculty member may still run counter to best interests of athletes, and some lack sufficient understanding of what is really going on within athletics.

Senior Woman Administrator (SWA)	Highest-ranking female involved in the management of an institution's intercollegiate athletics program. An institution with a female director of athletics may designate a different female involved with management of the member's program as a fifth representative to the NCAA governance structure. (NCAA Const. Art. 4.02.4) (this is a role at the conference level as well)	Usually very committed to serving athletes, but obvious conflicts of interest as an athletic department administrator. Required to be strategic about addressing issues unrelated to monetary aims of the department, because they are not usually the primary focus of others in leadership and could negatively affect SWA's effectiveness at pushing for certain changes.
Coaches	Responsible for the actions of all institutional staff members who report, directly or indirectly to the head coach (NCAA Bylaw 11.1.1.1)	Obvious conflicts of interest in most cases. Some are truly look out for their players and help fight certain issues related to loss of eligibility and certain waivers. Coaches possess most of the power over athletes because they control playing time, scholarships, and team culture.
Trainers	Assigned to each sport to look after a wide range of injury-related and overall health needs of athletes.	Typically know the most about what is going on within individual teams. Generally, one of the best advocates for athletes, however, limited by lack of power and duty to report to coaches.
Medical Personnel	Doctors and specialists. A team physician is required to be assigned to each team, who is either an MD or DO, with a current license in good standing to practice medicine in the state in which institution is located. Authorized to oversee the medical services for injuries and all illnesses incidental to a student-athlete's participation in intercollegiate athletics	Limited contact with athletes, and often avoided by players who fear being removed from competition due to injury. Virtually no power to (and often no interest in) advocating for players, except sometimes where injuries are concerned. Degree of care varies widely between universities and doctors are often assigned to specific teams.
Sports Psychologist	Individual available to individual athletes and teams to address issues related to mental health, performance issues, teambuilding, etc.	Can be helpful for certain issues, but often reports information to coaches that was shared by players, which erodes trust. Virtually no power within athletic department.
Athletic Academic Support Staff	Athletic department personnel who assist athletes in navigating through college by assisting with class selection, finding tutors, proctoring exams, etc.	Usually very helpful to athletes and a good resource, though they are limited in terms of influence on both the academic and athletic side. They also monitor study hall and sometimes report players to coaches for missing study hall or tutoring sessions. No power over coaches' decisions.
Academic Deans and Professors	Members of the academic faculty.	Usually lack a working understanding of athletics and have limited, if any, power within the athletic department. Often have a biased opinion in favor of, or in opposition to, athletes and sometimes allow that to color their treatment of athletes positively or negatively.

Nutritionist	Works with teams and individuals to increase performance and health through proper nutrition.	Can be helpful, but often works directly with coaches and shares information about nutritional needs of players. Virtually no power within the structure and employed by school
NCAA Staff	Those working at the national office.	Staff overseeing member-driven institution that makes decisions, which often run counter to the best interests of athletes. Lack of trust between NCAA staff and athletes/schools.
Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)	Comprised of 32 members, with one member representing each conference with voting power on the Division I Board of Directors, Division I Council, and Committees. Responsible. Mission: "to enhance the total student-athlete experience by protecting student-athlete well-being, fostering a positive student-athlete image and inclusive student-athlete environment, and promoting student-athlete engagement at the national, conference and local levels." (SAAC Mission Statement)	Individual committee members are extremely dedicated to advocating on behalf of athletes, however SAAC lacks sufficient enough power, information, support, and skills to adequately represent athletes. Heavily controlled and influenced by the NCAA liaisons responsible for the committee. Liaisons limit SAAC members' contact with media and other individuals (especially those representing ideas counter to NCAA platforms and propaganda). Insufficient voting power within the NCAA governance structure and often provided misleading information by NCAA staff.
Campus (and Conference) SAACs	Comprised of members of each team on campus (or each school within a conference). Address issues within the institution. Levels of participation among athletics staff varies by institution. In many cases, administrator participation increased after SAAC was granted voting power in 2014. (Required by NCAA, with composition and duties left up to each institution to determine. NCAA Const. Art. 6.1.4)	Depending upon the school or conference, these committees can sometimes have more influence over certain issues on campuses. Inadequately equipped for meaningful representation of individual athletes and overseen by athletics staff (who must still answer to those with interests running counter to athletes).

*Note: There are various other bodies within the structure (e.g., those comprised of coaches, FARs, etc.), but none possess the influence and independence required to adequately represent the best interests of college athletes.